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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001149

SIPDIS

AIDAC
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SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AF/SP, DCHA
NAIROBI FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA, USAID/REDSO, AND FAS
USMISSION UN ROME
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
NAIROBI FOR SFO
NSC FOR JBRAUSE, NSC/AFRICA FOR SHORTLEY
USUN FOR TMALY
BRUSSELS FOR PLERNER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [ASEC](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [KAWC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: Sudan - Operational Constraints Related to
Darfur Presence

Ref: A) Khartoum 949, B) Khartoum 852

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Any U.S. government (USG) initiatives linked to the support of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) must take into account the operational realities of the region. The experience of USAID's humanitarian operation provides insight into the challenges that will face any new USG operations in Darfur. USAID's Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) for Darfur was set up in April 2004 and has had continual presence in the region over the past two years. (Note: The USAID DART was transformed into the Darfur Field Office. End Note.) Any plans to augment USG presence in Darfur must consider the requirements for security and facilities and the regulatory impediments from the Government of National Unity (GNU). End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Security: The lack of security throughout Darfur remains a major obstacle for humanitarian and other operations. Over the past several months, United Nations (U.N.) agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have found themselves unable to access many parts of Darfur due to generalized violence linked to ongoing conflict as well as attacks targeting aid agencies and their staff. Insecurity has reached a point in West Darfur where aid agencies are seriously considering the suspension of humanitarian activities in order to safeguard their staff and property. Unchecked violence hampers mobility throughout Darfur. A government-imposed curfew in all of Darfur's major cities - El Fasher, El Geneina, and Nyala - indicates the level of tension related to growing lawlessness. Increased USG presence in Darfur's major cities and towns would require that significant security measures be put in place.

¶3. (SBU) Facilities: The only USG facilities currently in Darfur are linked to USAID's Darfur Field Office (DFO). The DFO operates compounds in El Fasher and Nyala that have office space and living quarters for six individuals. The USAID humanitarian presence in Darfur utilizes the entire capacity of these limited facilities. There is no room for expansion in Nyala and few options at the El Fasher facility. The DFO currently has three vehicles in El Fasher and two vehicles in Nyala. (Note: There is one light armored vehicle at each location. End note.) All vehicles must be parked inside the compounds

and there is currently no space for additional vehicles within the current arrangement. It is expected that capacity of DFO facilities will be stretched even further by the deployment of additional USAID/DCHA personnel who would be needed to assist in obligating funds allocated for Darfur programs in the supplemental funding bill. The bill recently cleared the Senate and is expected to be approved by Congress in the coming months. The DFO offices in Darfur currently have modest communication facilities designed to support a maximum of six USAID staff. A V-sat will soon be operational in El Fasher; however, the office in Nyala operates using B-GAN technology.

¶4. (SBU) GNU Obstructionism: Sudan's Government of National Unity (GNU), like its predecessor, the Government of Sudan (GoS), has perfected the art of obstructionism in relation to humanitarian operations in Darfur. The general lack of government cooperation significantly retards operations and cripples the efficiency of the humanitarian response. The laundry list of government tricks includes: delaying or refusing the issuance of visas, delaying or refusing travel permits, interference in the staffing of agencies through imposition of a labyrinth of hiring practices, arduous registration requirements, and extreme holdups in clearing the import of vehicles, communications gear, and other vital equipment through customs through Port Sudan (Ref A). Furthermore, the GNU recently signed into law the Organization of Humanitarian and Voluntary Work Act (Ref B) which essentially forbids NGOs and civil society groups from engaging in overtly political acts under the threat of being closed down or expelled from the country. This new law provides the government with greater legal

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authority to restrain groups that involve themselves in matters that the GNU might find political in nature, including support for DPA acceptance and implementation.

¶5. (SBU) Setting Up Shop: Any new office or organization (international or national) introduced to facilitate DPA implementation or political party development in Darfur will be required to register with the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) at the national level, as well as local authorities at each operational location in Darfur. Staff must be hired according to strict guidelines laid down by the HAC requiring organizations to vet all positions and candidates through the HAC and Ministry of Labor before any hiring can occur. This is a time consuming process that often lasts months. All program proposals must also be shared with governmental authorities and must receive approval before any activities can begin. Once international staff are in country, they must reapply for work permits every three months, leaving agencies little certainty that they will be able to retain staff necessary to carry out programs over extended periods of time. U.N. humanitarian agencies are generally not required to abide by the registration, program, and hiring regulations imposed by the government. However, the current disagreement between the GNU and the U.N. over the extension of the U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) Status of Forces Agreement (SoFA) to other U.N. agencies greatly restricts the movement of U.N. humanitarian staff.

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